

Application No. 10/801,402
Response to Office Action

Customer No. 01933

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 3 and 16-23 have been canceled, without prejudice, and new claims 24-30 have been added.

New independent claim 24 and claims 25-30 depending therefrom have been added based on Figs. 12-15 and the disclosure in the specification at, for example, page 35, line 9 to page 46, line 5.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that new claims 24-30 be approved and entered.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1, 3 and 16-23 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of JP 9-61365 (previously cited "Matsuzawa"), USP 6,594,012 (previously cited "Takeuchi et al"), USP 6,621,571 (newly cited "Maeda et al"), JP 11-219990 (previously cited "Mizuno et al") and USP 6,559,938 (newly cited "Smedt"). This rejection, however, is respectfully traversed with respect to new claims 24-30.

According to the present invention as recited in new independent claim 24, both a front surface moving section which

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moves the sample for inspection of the front surface, and a rear surface moving section which moves the sample for inspection of the rear surface are provided in the inspection section. And according to the present invention as recited in new independent claim 24, the sample is moved to and from the front surface moving section via at least the rear surface moving section, and the rear surface of the sample is inspected while the rear surface moving section moves the sample.

With this structure, the space necessary for conveying the sample can be reduced, since the rear surface moving section also serves to convey the sample to the front surface moving section. In addition, since the rear surface of the sample may be inspected while the sample is moved, the inspection of the sample takes less time.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references disclose, teach or suggest a rear surface moving section and a front surface moving section arranged such that the rear surface moving section moves the sample to and from the front surface moving section.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in new independent claim 24 and claims 25-30 depending therefrom clearly patentably distinguishes over the cited references, taken singly or in any combination, under 35 USC 103.


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Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,


Douglas Holtz
Reg. No. 33,902

Frishauf, Holtz, Goodman & Chick, P.C.
767 Third Avenue - 25th Floor
New York, New York 10017-2023
Tel. No. (212) 319-4900
Fax No. (212) 319-5101

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